

Message Text

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ORIGIN ACDA-12

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TO AMEMBASSY LAGOS
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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 227814

USIAEA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, TECH, MNUC, NI

SUBJECT: NUCLEAR FUEL FOR NIGERIA

REFS: (A) LAGOS 6146; (B) STATE 93306;
(C) 77 STATE 254843; (D) STATE 149913

1. DEPARTMENT PUZZLED BY ALLEGATION IN REFTEL A THAT
NIGERIANS DEFERRED POWER PROJECT PARTLY DUE TO US REFUSAL
TO SUPPLY FUEL. NIGERIA, AS A PARTY TO THE NON-PROLIFERA-
TION TREATY AND A PARTICIPANT IN INFCE, IS AN IMPORTANT
THIRD WORLD COUNTRY IN RELATION TO US NON-PROLIFERATION
OBJECTIVES AND CONTINUED COOPERATION WITH THE NIGERIANS
IN THIS FIELD IS ESSENTIAL. ACCORDINGLY, WE WOULD REGRET
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ANY MISAPPREHENSIONS ON THEIR PART REGARDING COOPERATION
WITH THE US ON PEACEFUL NUCLEAR ENERGY.

2. US BILATERAL COOPERATION OCCURS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK
OF AN AGREEMENT FOR COOPERATION. THERE IS NO US-NIGERIAN
AGREEMENT BUT US HAS NO OBJECTION TO NEGOTIATING AN AGREE-
MENT WITH THE NIGERIANS. REF B CONTAINED TEXT OF SUCH AN

AGREEMENT AND EXPRESSED US WILLINGNESS TO BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS. UNDER THE TERMS OF A BILATERAL AGREEMENT, THE US WILL LICENSE FUEL FOR POWER PROGRAMS. THE PRESIDENT INDICATED THIS TO OBASANJO DURING HIS WASHINGTON VISIT LAST FALL. THUS, WE ARE AT A LOSS TO UNDERSTAND NIGERIAN STATEMENT THAT US REFUSED TO SUPPLY FUEL FOR POWER PROGRAM.

3. US HAS INDICATED TO NIGERIANS THAT WE ARE NOT PREPARED TO PROVIDE HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM (HEU) FOR A RESEARCH REACTOR. THIS IS PART OF US POLICY TO DECREASE STOCKS OF HEU ABROAD AND CONVERT RESEARCH REACTORS TO LOWER ENRICHMENTS IN LIGHT OF US CONCERNS OVER PROLIFERATION AND NUCLEAR TERRORISM DANGERS INHERENT IN USE OF HEU. HOWEVER, WE WOULD SUPPLY LEU ENRICHED URANIUM FOR A RESEARCH REACTOR AND SUCH MATERIAL IS MORE THAN ADEQUATE FOR THE RESEARCH AND TRAINING ASSOCIATED WITH A NEW NUCLEAR PROGRAM. MOREOVER, AS A NPT PARTY, NIGERIA WOULD QUALIFY FOR THE ASSISTANCE THE US ANNOUNCED AT SSOD IN USE OF LEU FOR RESEARCH REACTORS (SEE REF D FOR DETAILS).

4. US POLICY ON PROVIDING FUEL FOR POWER PROGRAMS CONTINUES TO BE THAT FORMULATED BY PRESIDENT CARTER AND ANNOUNCED ON APRIL 7, 1977. "WE WILL INCREASE US PRODUCTION CAPACITY FOR ENRICHED URANIUM TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE AND TIMELY SUPPLY OF NUCLEAR FUELS FOR DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN NEEDS." THE RECENTLY ENACTED NUCLEAR NON-CONFIDENTIAL

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PROLIFERATION ACT OF 1978 DECLARES THAT IT IS US POLICY TO PROVIDE A RELIABLE SUPPLY OF NUCLEAR FUEL TO COUNTRIES SUCH AS NIGERIA WHO SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL NON-PROLIFERATION EFFORTS.

5. WE WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF EMBASSY COULD (A) ASSESS WHETHER OR NOT THE OPINIONS STATED IN REFTEL A ARE CURRENT THINKING IN THE NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT AND, IF SO, (B) SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT ON US NUCLEAR COOPERATION POLICY VIS-A-VIS FMG. THIS SHOULD NOT BE PERCEIVED AS ENCOURAGING NUCLEAR POWER ON FMG BUT WE DO FEEL IT IS NOT IN OUR INTEREST TO ALLOW THIS MISAPPREHENSION ABOUT US NUCLEAR EXPORT POLICY TO STAND GIVEN THE CURRENT NORTH-SOUTH SPLIT ON ACCESS TO NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY. CHRISTOPHER

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